



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

Office file
8/17

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's AUGUST 17, 1954

PRIBILOF ISLANDS FUR SEAL TAKE FOR 1954 ANNOUNCED

A total of 63,882 fur-seal skins was taken this year in the Government-administered sealing operations on Alaska's Pribilof Islands, Acting Secretary of the Interior Ralph A. Tudor said today.

The annual sealing operations which are conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service began on June 22 on St. Paul Island and June 27 on St. George Island. Operations were terminated on July 27.

This year's yield was 2,496 skins under that of last year's take of 66,378. The average annual yield over the past ten years has been around 65,000 skins.

Although the fur-seal industry on the Pribilofs is the responsibility of the United States Government, 20 percent of this year's take will be delivered to the Canadian Government under the terms of the Provisional Fur-Seal Agreement of 1942, between the two countries. The remaining skins will be delivered to a private concern in St. Louis for processing and sale at public auction under a Government contract.

Approximately 80 percent of the world's fur seals go to the Pribilof Islands each summer to breed. During the winter these seals range southward as far as southern California.

At one time the Alaskan seal's numbers diminished to such an extent that the herd's existence was threatened. The depletion was due principally to pelagic sealing--the indiscriminate killing of seals at sea.

Under the protection of international agreements, the herd has been restored and is being maintained at its original level of abundance. Since the annual take is limited primarily to 3-year old males, considered surplus from the standpoint of breeding, the species is assured of survival under present conditions.

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